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American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

THE MISSIONARY CALL FROM CHINA.

For Christian Young Men in Colleges and Theological
Seminaries. Also for Monthly Concert use
by Pastors and others.



A FAMILIAR LETTER.

THE MISSIONARY CALL FROM CHINA.

TUNGCHO, CHINA, NOV. 20, 1879.

WE rejoice in the forward movement toward the heart of Africa. Providence seems to be leading you to a place there side by side with other sections of the church. I trust our mission will soon be opened, and that it will have a glorious future. Africa must be enlightened, civilized, Christianized by the preaching of the gospel, and we, our beloved American Board, must do our share of the glorious work.

But while we keep step with other missionary societies in entering the opening door in Africa, it seems to me that the call to go forward in China, instead of being less loud and imperative than that which comes to us from the mysterious wilds of the Dark Continent, is far more so. Is it not loud enough to be heard across the oceans which intervene, and to penetrate the hearts of young men and women in America? What are the facts which constitute this call?

1. Three hundred to four hundred millions of souls are here crowded together within the limits of these eighteen provinces — about double the population of the African Continent.

2. Nine tenths of this field are still unoccupied, — nine tenths of these multitudes are still unreached by the gospel.

3. The whole field, in the providence of God, has become accessible. Missionaries may travel almost everywhere, and a residence can now be effected at most of the important points which it is desirable to occupy. The occupation of new fields may not be wholly free from danger; yet the deadly malaria and the fierce savage are not lurking about our every step, as in

Africa. Danger and difficulty ought not to deter us there ; but if God gives us a more open door here, it surely is no reason for passing it by.

4. There are facilities here which extend the range of a missionary's influence more widely than is possible in any other part of the world. The Classical language is read by scholars in every part of the empire, as well as in Japan. The Mandarin dialect is read by larger numbers throughout two thirds of the empire. Merchants and scholars are traveling back and forth, and we frequently meet persons from distant provinces.

5. Leaving out Japan, Madagascar, and the Polynesian Islands, perhaps in no other part of the heathen world has more fruit been gathered in proportion to the seed sown. This was not true twenty years ago, but I believe it is now. The number of church-members doubles about once in seven years.

6. Work done for China will certainly tell on the future of the world's history. The Chinese are an enterprising people. They are colonizing Manchuria and Mongolia on the north, the islands of the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and have made a lodgment on the shores of North and South America. Their young men are in your schools and colleges, and, as the papers tell us, they stand side by side with the proud Anglo-Saxon race in the contest for scholastic and literary honors. Christianized, China has a noble history before her, and must become a mighty factor in the great political, social, and religious movements of coming generations. Whoever is permitted to bear the humblest part in securing her conversion, though his name and work may find no place on the historic page, yet will surely send his influence down through the channels of human life, and do much to shape the destiny of the whole human family. Was ever such a tempting prize held up to animate the messenger of good tidings longing to do all he can for the salvation of souls, for the elevation of his race, and for the glory of God? My only wonder is that the Christian students in college are not too

impatient to wait for the completion of their course of study, and that those in the theological seminaries of our land, as they come forth, class by class, do not enlist *en masse*, and that even the pulpits of the wealthiest city churches, and the professors' chairs of our grandest universities, are not deserted, at least by their younger incumbents, in the overpowering desire and purpose to have a share in this sublime work. But, alas! either we missionaries are enthusiasts, seeing only delusive visions, or some people in Christian lands are blind; for it is certain we do not see things with the same eyes.

And oh, if young men and women only realized the *privilege* of this service! In reading the report of the meeting of the Board, the other day, my eye fell on the sentence, "Thirty men need China." I was at first ready to laugh at the blunder of the reporter; for doubtless the speaker really said, "China needs thirty men." But I began to muse, and the longer I mused the more convinced I became that China does not need the *men* any more certainly than do the men need *China*. Surely it offers them a field for the largest development of mind and heart; and the God who created them has no better way to ennoble and bless them than by calling them to this service.

Everywhere we need more helpers to carry the gospel to the multitudes.

Yours very truly,

L. D. CHAPIN.

"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

Sent from rooms of A. B. C. F. M., Feb. 5, 1880.

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